

DATE Celebrates the Launch of the State's First Impaired Driving Simulator Program

**Secretary Nathaniel McQueen Jr., DATE Director John Yeomans,
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Communications
Manager Denée Crumrine, Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long**

DOVER, DE – The Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement (DATE) was joined by Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long, Safety and Homeland Security Secretary Nathaniel McQueen Jr. representatives from the Office of Highway Safety (OHS) and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield to celebrate the launch of the State's first Impaired Driving Simulator Program.

“It is critical that every driver on the road understands the repercussions of driving while under the influence,” said Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long. “Deaths and injuries due to driving under the influence are preventable. Innovative solutions like this can help to reduce the number of accidents and save lives. I thank all of the state partners for their leadership and the support of Highmark DE in launching the DUI Driving simulator. Partnerships like this help make our state stronger and healthier.”

The simulator program, made possible through a partnership with the Office of Highway Safety and Highmark Delaware, will allow drivers to experience what can happen when they operate a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or while distracted with a cell phone. Vision, braking, and steering are impacted by the various levels of impairment and demonstrate the dangers in a virtual training scenario.

“Impaired driving remains prevalent on our roadways. Much like aggressive driving or other dangerous behaviors, impaired driving is entirely preventable,” said Secretary McQueen.

“Many thanks to DATE, OHS, and the support of Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield for devoting their time and dedication to this project. Projects like this are critical for our efforts to reduce the incidence of impaired and distracted driving throughout our state.”

With 3,972 DUI arrests and 1,050 DUI related crashes occurring in our State last year, DATE and OHS will join forces to deploy the simulator at schools and community events statewide to educate the public and create an awareness around the dangers of impaired driving.

“Our Division is pleased to present this state-of-the-art Impaired Distracted Driver Simulator. From its inception, this project has been supported by our partners at Highmark Delaware, Delaware Office of Highway Safety and the Office of the Secretary of Safety and Homeland Security,” DATE Director John Yeomans said. “This is an extremely valuable tool in our continued efforts to educate our citizens and especially our young drivers regarding impaired driving.”

“Driving under the influence is the result of poor decision-making, and has tragic consequences,” OHS Director Kimberly Chesser said. “The DUI Simulator offers an opportunity for people to experience various driving conditions, hazards and scenarios as if they were under the influence while safely using a simulation program. The simulation mimics the difficulties drivers will encounter at various blood alcohol content levels. By incorporating the DUI simulator into our safety programs, we are educating the community about the consequences of impaired driving and reinforcing our drive sober message.”

DATE was awarded a \$140,000 grant from Highmark Delaware to help purchase the driving simulator.

“Highmark Delaware’s BluePrints for the Community is pleased to support the purchase of an impaired driving simulator for

the Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement as they partner with schools and community-based organizations throughout the state to combat impaired driving. By providing real-life scenarios in a safe and controlled environment, good driving practices can be instilled in our young drivers,” Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield President Nick Moriello said.

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